

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAJ-01 /054 W

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O R 150835Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL MILAN

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4615

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 0626

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, PORG, IT

SUBJECT:COMMUNIST REGIONAL SECRETARY QUERCIOLI'S TOUR D'HORIZON

REF 75 MILAN 1397 (NOTAL)

1. ON MARCH 11 I MET WITH QUERCIOLI AFTER A CONSIDERABLE INTERVAL. HE IS UNDISPUTED BOSS OF COMMUNIST PARTY AND APPARATUS IN ALL OF LOMBARDY AS WELL AS CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER, FORMER DIRECTOR OF COMMUNIST DAILY L'UNITA AND PERSONNA GRATA TO EVERY MAJOR POLITICAL LEADER IN AREA FROM RIGHT WING DC TO SOCIALISTS AND INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL LEADERS LIKE PIRELLI. QUERCIOLI WAS CORDIAL AND STRAIGHT FORWARD AS USUAL.

2. MOSCOW COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS. QUERCIOLI SAID HE THOUGH THE PCI HAD DONE THE RIGHT THING. THE POSITION TO TAKE HAD BEEN DEBATED WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP AND THE CONCLUSION WAS THAT IT WAS BEST FOR BERLINGUER TO ATTEND AND TO SPEAK FRANKLY. THE ITALIAN PARTY WOULD HAVE HAD GREATER INTERNAL PROBLEMS HAD BERLINGUER EITHER STAYED HOME OR MADE A PRO-FORMA CEREMONIAL SPEECH. THE FINAL FACE TO FACE MEETING WITH BREZHNEV WAS NOT A LOVE DUET. THE TWO CENTRAL ISSUES THAT DIVIDE THE PCI FROM THE SOVIETS, OF INTERNAL SOVIET POLICY AND PCI POLICY IN
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ITALY, WERE SIMPLY NOT DISCUSSED AT ALL. IT WAS ONLY ON

THE NEED FOR DETENT THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT.

3. IN ANY EVENT, BERLINGUER'S POSITION WAS HEARD NOT ONLY BY THE SOVIETS BUT ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND IT HAD TO HAVE HAD A BENEFICIAL IMPACT ON THE SOVIETS. BREZHNEV'S REELECTION WAS GOOD NEWS SINCE HE WAS THE MOST LIBERAL OF THE CHOICES. THE OUSTER OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER POLANSKY WAS NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF AGRICULTURE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE HE REPRESENTED A TOUGHER MORE STALINIST LINE.

4. THE CURRENT SOVIET LEADERSHIP, SAID QUERCIOLO, IS ALL OLD. IN A FEW YEARS, THERE WILL BE A NEW GENERATION WITH AN ENTIRELY NEW OUTLOOK. HE HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE LIBERAL.

5. THERE WAS NOT REALLY A GREAT DEAL THAT MOSCOW COULD DO ABOUT THE PCI POSITION. IT HAD NO LEVERAGE IN ITALY. IT HAD TRIED TO DEVELOP A PRO-MOSCOW FACTION WHEN THE PCI CRITICIZED THE CZECH INVASION. BUT THE FAILED AND IT HAD NO BASE NOW. THE SOVIETS HAD TO BE CAREFUL. THEY HAD ALIENATED THE CHINESE, FAILED IN PORTUGAL AND HAD BLOWN IT IN CHILE - ALL CONTRARY TO PCI ADVICE. THEY RISKED ISOLATING THEMSELVES WITH ONLY CAPTIVE PARTIES IN EASTERN EUROPE AS ALLIES.

6. THE FRENCH PARTY HAD MADE ITS TURN AROUND AFTER LONG BEHIND THE SCENES PREPARATION. THE PCF AGREED WITH THE PCI ON TACTICS IN PORTUGAL BUT OPPOSED BREAKING PUBLICLY WITH MOSCOW. BUT WHEN THE SOVIET POLICY FAILED AND THE PCF BEGAN TO BE HURT BY THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS, THEY CHANGED PUBLICLY TOO. NOW THERE WAS AGREEMENT AMONG THE PCI, PCF AND SPANISH COMMUNISTS ON ALL MAJOR ISSUES EXCEPT EUROPEAN UNIFICATION. THE PCF CONTINUED TO BACK AN OUTMODED NATIONALIST OPPOSITION TO UNIFICATION THAT COINCIDED WITH MOSCOW'S HOSTILITY.

7. ITALIAN SITUATION. QUERCIOLO SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS VERY VERY DANGEROUS. THE ECONOMY WAS ON THE ROPES, UNEMPLOYMENT WAS HIGH, SCHOOL LEAVERS WERE UNEMPLOYED, THE TRADE UNIONS WERE LOSING POWER AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS LEADERLESS. IT WAS AN INVITATION TO DISASTER. THE COMMUNISTS WERE ANGRY WITH THE SOCIALISTS FOR HAVING WORSENED THE SITUATION BY BRINGING DOWN THE LAST MORO GOVERNMENT. NOW THERE WAS A RISK OF NEW

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ELECTIONS THAT COULD SOLVE NOTHING. HE OPPOSED THEM.

8. THE PCI WAS NOT EAGER TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT. THE NEED WAS TO AGREE ON A PROGRAM TO SOLVE THE NATIONS PRESSING PROBLEMS. REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADER LA MOLFA'S STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION WERE ENCOURAGING.

9. IT WAS ABSURD TO THINK OF THE PCI IN A GOVERNMENT NOW.

ITALY WAS OVERWHELMINGLY DEPENDENT FOR ITS PROSPERITY ON THE WEST. NO ITALIAN COMMUNIST MINISTER COULD EXPECT TO GET LOANS FROM LONDON OR BONN OR WASHINGTON IN A PINCH. SO THAT WOULD HELP NO ONE.

10. THE PCI POLICY WAS TO ADVANCE SLOWLY. THAT WAS TRICKY BECAUSE IT WAS SO HARD TO CONTROL. IF THE PARTY GAINED TOO RAPIDLY IT WOULD BE THRUST INTO A GOVERNMENT PREMATURELY. BUT IF IT FALTERED, IT COULD TAKE A TUMBLE LIKE THE BICYCLIST WHO TRIES TO STAND STILL.

11. THE ITALIAN SOCIALISTS WERE CRAZY TO TALK ABOUT A LEFT ALTERNATIVE. IT WAS SENSELESS. WHAT DID IT MEAN? A COMMUNIST-SOCIALIST MAJORITY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GOVERN. THE CATHOLICS WERE ESSENTIAL.

12. QUERCIOLI DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WERE FINISHED. FAR FROM IT. THEY WOULD NOT REGAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. BUT THE PARTY WAS STRONG. THE WHOLE PROCESS OF INTENSE SELF-CRITICISM GENERATED BY THE JUNE 15 ELECTIONS WAS A SIGN OF STRENGTH AND NOT OF WEAKNESS.

13. THUS SPAKE QUERCIOLI.FINA

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